'Ideal Copy' versus 'Ideal Texts': The Application of Bibliographical Description to Facsimiles

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The present paper considers the implications of technical bibliographical language when used to describe and promote photographic facsimiles, particularly facsimiles of works produced during the hand-press period.[†] The facsimile has an ambivalent status: it is both a material book reproducing another book, and an edition representing an abstract text. The language used to describe a facsimile is thus a blend of the bibliographical language used to describe and analyze physical books and the textual-critical language dealing with editions and their production. Of particular concern in this paper is the problem of 'composite' facsimiles and the application to such facsimiles of the term 'ideal copy' — a technical term from descriptive bibliography. Composite facsimiles are those made from pages and formes of different individual books; the best-known of these is Charlton Hinman's facsimile of the Shakespeare First Folio.² To claim, as some scholars have, that such a composite is in any way an 'ideal copy' of the book it photographs is misleading. In the interest of promoting particular facsimile projects, the very specialists who should be most concerned with maintaining the integrity of technical bibliographical language have allowed both the ordinary senses and the philosophical senses of 'ideality' to intrude.

Facsimile Reproduction versus Facsimile Edition

The ambivalent status of the facsimile is itself a product of the basic, if elusive, distinction between textual criticism and bibliography. To invoke the often-quoted formula of Greg, 'bibliography is the

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study of books as material objects'; textual criticism, on the other hand, is concerned with an abstract entity — the text — and falls within the province of the editor, for whom the material embodiment of the text is ancillary. This was a distinction insisted upon by Greg, but often violated through such mediating terms as 'critical bibliography'.³

A facsimile (calling it an 'edition' begs the question) directly challenges this distinction between the bibliographer and the editor. What is the nature of the thing produced or reproduced? A 'book' is a material object, by its very nature non-reproducible. The only part of a book that is reproducible is a text — the immaterial entity represented by the physical ink on the page. Such an entity can be the object of scholarship: bibliographical studies and particular editions. But the particular edition no more *is* the text than the bibliographical study *is* the book. In order to solve one difficulty (the conflict between the desirability of disseminating information while preserving particular objects), the makers of facsimiles produce another. Their insistence on the importance of direct contact with material evidence leads paradoxically to the dematerialization of that evidence through the process of reproduction.⁴

The justification for a facsimile is bibliographical: of primary importance is not the text but the material embodiment (or the facsimile description of that embodiment) of a text.⁵ But the text presented can develop its own life; repeated citations can bestow upon the facsimile reproduction the status of 'standard edition.' That is, a facsimile evolves to assume the same relation to a book that an edition does to a text: it becomes less a bibliographical entity than an editorial one. The reproduction of a book in facsimile has the effect of presenting the unique object as reproducible, as multiple. It lends a material form to a supposed abstract ideal of presswork — the exact reproduction of a text.

The scholarly rhetoric surrounding facsimiles not only provides examples of attempts to promote a standard edition but also reveals anxiety over this very promotion. In 1955, Fredson Bowers produced a stinging review of the Yale facsimile of the Shakespeare First Folio, a review which continues to have repercussions.⁶ Bowers's objections were both technical (the reproduction was inaccurate due to technicalities of the process) and theoretical (the Yale facsimile was an edition, since it required intervention by printers, over which the bibliographer had no control). But the warning Bowers issued was practical. The Yale Facsimile was itself dangerous and 'unsafe':

The present reproduction is sure to be quoted from in general critical writing as identical with the original; and since it is sometimes not identical, for years to come occasional misquotation will result from the use of this unsafe authority. (p. 51)

Bowers's fears may have been justified. When Charlton Hinman produced the facsimile for Norton in 1968, he claimed to provide 'the First Folio text' [Hinman's emphasis], a 'fully corrected copy' (pp. xxii–xxiii). What appears as F1 in Shakespeare editions would henceforth be the readings of the Norton facsimile, not the Yale facsimile; and it would be the Norton facsimile readings that would provide the basis for such sigla as F1(c) versus F1(u), distinguishing what Hinman claimed were corrected and uncorrected states.⁷ The Norton facsimile became quickly the Norton *text*.⁸

Composite Facsimiles and Variant Formes

The most interesting problem with bibliographical language and facsimiles results from the attempt to reproduce not any particular book, but rather a better book than may have been produced at press: that is, the facsimile providing a composite text which is, in some cases, promoted as the 'ideal' text.

The principles under which these are constructed are simply expressed. Most early facsimiles were produced by photographing or type-setting a single copy. Composite copies (sometimes disparaged as 'mongrel copies'⁹) were produced by combining parts of several copies (this was the method used by Hinman in producing the Norton Shakespeare facsimile). These two procedures have obvious textual-critical analogues: the first responds to notion of 'best-text' or 'single-text' editing; the second to 'eclectic' editing.¹⁰

The most important discussion of this problem was published in 1952 by Bowers, whose complex but somewhat paradoxical argument seems to have been ignored by those producing subsequent facsimiles.¹¹ The 'composite text' facsimile, produced by combining parts of different books (whether by forme or by page) had been established by the Malone Society in their type-facsimile reprints. The Malone Society had operated under the simple principle that corrected formes were the ones that should be reproduced.¹² Bowers critiques this procedure under two aspects: (1) in what sense is the procedure eclectic? (2) is the decision to use corrected formes the right one? Both of these questions respond to the distinction

addressed here between bibliography and textual criticism. But in 1952, Bowers still saw bibliography (particularly the production of facsimile editions) as in the service of textual criticism — that is, the production of a text.

To the first question, Bowers provided a tortuous response; the basis for his argument, which I will quote in full, is the assumption that eclecticism in editing is unscientific, unsystematic, and thus a bad thing. Bowers is here defending the composite facsimile against a textual-critical objection:

The first point is the obvious one that whereas a critical edition is necessarily eclectic, a facsimile edition — regardless of its form — should be rigidly non-eclectic. Possibly, a Malone Society reprint is in one sense eclectic since it makes a choice of states of formes to reprint and may, in fact, present the complete text in a state which does not represent that in any preserved copy. However, if the point is valid I have made about the basic type-setting being the one matter of crucial importance, and not its variable impressions on mixed and bound sheets of paper, then paradoxically the Malone Society reprints are, in fact, truly non-eclectic and the usual photographic facsimile is the eclectic edition, for it presents a mixed text and the Malone Society a bibliographically pure (though not necessarily textually pure) exemplum. But to examine eclecticism on such grounds is doubtless idle, for as applied to textual work it ordinarily means no more than the admission (by emendation of individual readings) of readings from other early editions, or of critical origin, as substitutes or additions to the original, including excision of original readings. In this sense a Malone Society reprint is truly non-eclectic since it admits no individual emendation. Its selection of readings to reprint from variant formes is done on the basis of rigidly reproducing only one state of the forme, and even this selection can scarcely be called emendation since both states are present in the original document being reprinted. This principle is correct, for a facsimile edition must never be coloured by the intervention of editorial personality as concerns the rightness or wrongness of any individual reading. (p. 263)

Bowers goes to almost absurd extremes to clear the Malone Society of the imagined charge, but is left with a defence that any editor committed to eclecticism could also adopt. What seems to distinguish the facsimile maker from the editor is only the insistence that facsimile variants must be extant in actual copies, and that the unit

of the *lemma* must be the forme, and not, as in editing, the phrase.¹³ As long as the decision between variants is based on a 'principle' rather than a 'personality,' the facsimile maker is exonerated from the charge of intervention. But what modern textual critic claims to be 'unprincipled'?¹⁴

The second half of Bowers's argument then examines the appropriateness of choosing corrected over uncorrected formes for the facsimile, assuming that these can be distinguished (pp. 266ff.).¹⁵ Bowers argues paradoxically that the facsimile maker should choose the uncorrected state of each forme 'in all but exceptional cases' (p. 272). The reason for this apparently perverse notion is that Bowers sees the facsimile as an editorial entity (a text), not a bibliographical one (the reproduction of a book):

I take it, on the contrary, that the prime purpose of collation to determine the extent of press-correction is instead to discover the readings of the original type-setting, with a view to retaining these unless they are of such a nature as normally to call for correction by a conservative critical editor. (p. 270)

The facsimile itself is in the service of the text:

it is clear to me that if a facsimile edition reprinted the corrected formes, the reader would in general receive a more distorted view of the text than if he were furnished with the readings from the uncorrected formes. (p. 271)

If a facsimile edition is not to serve as the basis for close textual investigations, it has small reason for existence save for purely antiquarian interest. (p. 269)

Not only is it in the service of textual studies, it itself is defined *as* a text. In the above quotations, the textual-critical analogy is unmistakable: Bowers prefers the uncorrected state for the same reason the classical textual critic objects to that supposed evil demon of textual criticism, the 'intelligent scribe' or the 'scribally-edited text.'¹⁶

Bowers's Notion of Ideal Copy

The primary aim of the present facsimile is to furnish a reliable photographic reproduction of what the printers of the original

edition would themselves have considered an ideal copy of the First Folio of Shakespeare. (Hinman, *The Norton Facsimile*, p. xxii)

I will return to the full context of this quotation; here it is enough to note the specific appeal to the notion of 'ideal copy' — the technical term of descriptive bibliography. This paragraph is often cited; but no one to my knowledge has pointed out that the technical meaning and ordinary meaning of 'ideal' (conflated here) are in fact quite radically opposed. The Norton facsimile may be ideal in either sense: but it cannot be ideal in both senses.

The most detailed description of 'ideal copy' occurs in Bowers's *Principles of Bibliographical Description*. His discussion is presented in chapter 2, where 'ideal copy' is discussed after the sequence of entities: state, issue, and edition. For the hand-press period, state, issue, and edition constitute a hierarchy of variation and increasing abstraction. What qualifies a variant as a state, issue, or edition is that it be a variant recognized by the printer or produced by the printer. Those variants that are accidents result in what Bowers calls 'defective' or 'aberrant' copies, and are of no concern to the descriptive bibliographer.¹⁷

Bowers's definitions are as follows:

An EDITION is the whole number of copies of a book printed at any time or times from substantially the same setting of type-pages.

Edition thus includes all issues and variant states existing within its basic type-setting, as well as all impressions.

An ISSUE is the whole number of copies of a form of an edition put on sale at any time or times as a consciously planned printed unit and varying only in relation to the form of an 'ideal copy' of this unit. . . .

In its narrowest sense STATE is synonymous with VARIANT. . . . In its broadest sense, STATE covers all alterations in a book, even those made after sale has begun, where no change is made to the original title-page by cancellation. (pp. 40-2)

The discussion of these units, starting at the 'bottom of the ladder' (p. 42) with state, proceeds to what seems to be a greater level of abstraction, and ends with 'ideal copy.' But 'ideal copy' is not of the same order as these other distinctions. A state can be a variant (a particular material object). An issue, however, is a collection of objects, organized around a particular intention, 'a consciously

planned printed unit,' and defined by an historical event (put on sale). An edition is a collection of objects containing 'substantially the same setting' and is defined as the result of historical events.¹⁸

To clarify these definitions, Bowers appeals to the deliberately flexible notion of 'ideal copy':

The collational formula and the basic description of an edition should be that of an ideally perfect copy of the original issue. A description is constructed for an ideally perfect copy, not for any individual copy, because an important purpose of the description is to set up a standard of reference whereby imperfections may be detected and properly analyzed when a copy of a book is checked against the bibliographical description. In a very rare book the evidence may not be sufficient to construct a perfect description, but it is better to aim at this perfect description, even though its collational formula may be incomplete and full of queries, than to misrepresent a book by describing only an imperfect individual copy. Naturally, if the only known copy of a book seems normal, we must infer that it is perfect; we must not forget, however, that this is only an inference since lost copies may have contained alterations. (p. 113)

Bowers defines 'ideal copy' as a tool designed for the descriptive bibliographer only. It is used to construct a description, against which any scholar or bookdealer may then compare a particular copy in order to know its relation to other copies.

Ideal copy cannot always be rigidly defined, and with some books may indeed be quite hypothetical. Certain facts are clear. All planned alterations, whether made before or after public sale, which are included in a single issue of a book should ordinarily be present in the description of an ideal copy; redundancies caused by binding error are 'ideally' removed. (p. 115)

The technical term is by turns specific and flexible, and this has led to considerable slippage, both as the term is used by editors, and as it is used in various branches of bibliography. According to Bowers, these fields, even the branches of bibliography itself, must be accorded a degree of autonomy:

Press-corrections are a normal part of printing; moreover, on practical grounds, they are usually not detected by any bibliographical

examination short of complete collation of the text — a process which cannot be demanded of a descriptive bibliographer. (p. 107)

Although this remark occurs in one of Bowers's many internal 'Notes' in his book, it has important implications. There are certain things 'not demanded' of a descriptive bibliographer; some of these may well be precisely the things that anyone using a descriptive bibliography for its intended purpose will confront first: that is, the physical makeup of an individual copy. The note thus suggests that the province of terminology within descriptive bibliography is strictly limited to descriptive bibliography. There is no more reason to extend the notion of 'ideal copy' beyond descriptive bibliography than to extend the demands on the descriptive bibliographer. Once the analytical bibliographer begins to use the product of the descriptive bibliographer, the tools of the descriptive bibliographer (including the notion of 'ideal copy') have no place.

Even further from the province of the descriptive bibliographer, in Bowers's view, are some of the specific concerns of the textual critic or the literary scholar. Simple press-variants (discoverable only by collation and a main concern of an editor) have no place here. All matters related to edition-making (the intentions of the author) are relegated to the margins of his discussion.

But even in Bowers's own work, the language of adjacent fields intrudes, particularly the language of literary criticism, a field Bowers claims to exclude. The following is part of a polemic against McKerrow on the specific features distinguishing state from issue. Bowers seems to place the emphasis on the physical title page. But bibliographical changes in the title page are themselves signs of more abstract notions — human intentions, whether literary or economic — the central concerns for both McKerrow and Bowers:

We must, therefore, arbitrarily assume that any alteration made in the form of a book which was not important enough to justify a new title-leaf to call attention to it or to take advantage of the opportunity to bring the book up to date is a printer's attempt belatedly to construct an 'ideal copy' of his original issue and is not a re-issue in which sheets are given new life or chronicle change in publishing conditions by alteration of form. (p. 67)¹⁹

To Bowers, McKerrow's earlier distinctions are too imprecise:

His distinction is, I believe, unsatisfactory chiefly because it requires a bibliographer to be a literary critic and does not identify

the crucial point as being the title-page. On such literary grounds as he offers, *Troilus and Cressida* itself by no means presents a clear case of correction or re-issue. (p. 78)

A bibliographer cannot be expected to inquire minutely into a publisher's or author's intention and to decide on literary grounds whether an alteration is a correction or an attempt at re-issue. *He can be concerned with a publisher's intention only when it is openly manifested on the title-page.* (p. 79)

Bowers derides the effort of 'inquiring minutely' into a publisher's or author's mind, thus distancing himself from literary-critical debates over 'intentionality' that (at least today) seem characteristic of American literary criticism of the 1940s and 1950s. But the notion of intention that McKerrow invoked is ineradicable (it is this very notion that finally distinguishes state from issue), and Bowers is forced to speculate on matters as abstract and problematic as those considered by the dreaded literary critics themselves.

The Problem of 'Ideality'

The technical term from descriptive bibliography will not stay in place. Just what is an ideal? Anyone who has ever worked in an assembly line or performed other manual labour knows that ideals of production compete with pure subversion and mischievousness. Shoddy work is sometimes overlooked (it is unintentional), sometimes passed (unintentionally produced, but intentionally put on sale), and sometimes produced and sold with downright malicious intent, and Bowers's own studies have time and again pointed out examples of just this kind of thing. Bowers's presumed historical facts (printers' intentions and the ideal products associated with those intentions) are themselves projections of the bibliographer's own taxonomic concerns — concerns that result in those rational, efficient creatures McKenzie has criticized as 'printers of the mind.'²⁰

Even in Bowers's most carefully drafted paragraphs, the problematic nature of his technical language is apparent. 'Ideal copy' blurs into 'ideally perfect copy' (perhaps something else entirely), and the entities described by a description are conflated with the description itself. The term 'ideal copy' may be a principle, but the phrase itself can refer to a number of different things: a book, real or

imagined; a description of a book; a principle governing book description. Whether due to Bowers himself, or to his copy-editors, *Principles of Bibliographical Description* uses the phrase 'ideal copy' in a number of conflicting typographical settings — in italics, with inverted commas, and at times unmarked:

in such a case 'ideal copy' would seem to be a misnomer (p. 114);
 the original setting taken as the *ideal copy* (p. 115);
 Nothing is invented in the description of an ideal copy (p. 113, n48).

Its grammatical forms are also various, and the phrase can appear with the indefinite article, with the definite article, or alone:

An *ideal copy* of a book (p. 113);
 the form with the cancellans is the *ideal copy* (p. 114);
ideal copy in its true sense of physical makeup is not affected (p. 114).

Bowers uses the phrase in these various forms to refer to a material object, a Platonic Ideal transcending a group of objects, an Aristotelian Ideal organizing a group of objects, or the principle that permits objects to be grouped. The difference between a Platonic-realistic ideal and Aristotelian-nominalistic one (however we wish to name it!) should be noted. Even if 'ideal copy' is simply the generic term for a group of objects, there remains an ambiguity: it is either the intellectual ideal (what the printer had in mind) that is imperfectly realized in any particular object (Platonic ideal); or it is merely a *nomen*, a generic term covering a group of objects: the name can then refer to all products of a press edition and, furthermore, to all as yet undiscovered products of that press-run.

These very ambiguities introduced by Bowers challenge his principle of autonomy. There is hardly a case to be made for the limitation of a term to its technical sense when its philosophical and economic senses are hinted at throughout. It is these implications that are of primary interest to those fields most closely associated with descriptive bibliography: textual criticism and the book trade.²¹

For the bibliographer, the stakes here may be low. The difference between edition and issue, or issue and state can be an interesting intellectual puzzle, or perhaps an irritant; it can also provide the occasion to wage intellectual war against a fellow bibliographer. But in other fields, the stakes are extremely high, and the material value

of particular objects can rise or plummet depending on how these abstract terms are applied. For the book dealer, not only is there a distinct conflict between rare and correct, but the smuggling in of the notion of ideality necessarily implies economic value. Whether or not the bibliographer or literary scholar wants to admit it, the material value of books and their very accessibility (in libraries) depend on this notion of material value.

The relation of Bowers's language to the book trade is clear as we consider its primary use. Bowers's description does not describe or locate an actual object. We do not know, without a note, where an object answering to Bowers's description might be found. In other words, it does not help anyone seeking a material object, but is only useful for those attempting to judge a specific material object *already in their possession*. Again, the interests of the bookseller completely override those of the scholar. A scholar planning a trip to a library needs to know what is there; therefore, a bibliography of that library should certainly not be descriptive, but enumerative or analytical. A bookseller planning a sale needs to know how the value of an object matches the possible value of other objects.

From Book to Edition: The Hinman First Folio

For book dealers and publishers, value has a distinctly material aspect. For the literary scholar, value has to do with the authenticity or reliability of a text. Soon after Norton published Hinman's composite facsimile of the First Folio, David Bevington claimed that Hinman had created 'a theoretically perfect text':

Such a composite text suffers none of the common disadvantages of eclecticism in returning to original materials; for systematic textual analysis has determined as nearly as possible the page that the printer intended to create.²²

Bevington's language is very similar to the language used by Bowers in his 1952 defence of the Malone Society type-facsimiles. Hinman is here defended against the same imagined charge of the textual-critical evil of eclecticism that Bowers had brooded over two decades earlier. But Bevington goes further in his textual-critical language: just as editors often claim to print what authors intended to write, Hinman is here given credit for producing 'the page the printer intended to create.'²³

Hinman, of course, cannot be blamed for or credited with the hyperboles of his reviewers. He clearly took none of Bowers's specific critique of facsimiles into account: that the bibliographer should produce an 'uncorrected' document seemed no less absurd in 1968 than it had in 1952, even though bibliography itself was promoting itself as less and less a mere ancillary study to textual studies.²⁴ Hinman did, however, borrow from Bowers the technical term of descriptive bibliography — 'ideal copy' — and in applying this notion to his own facsimile produced a much more serious conflation of bibliographical and textual-critical terminology. Although Hinman does not specifically cite Bowers, the source of the following language is unmistakable:

The primary aim of the present facsimile is to furnish a reliable photographic reproduction of what the printers of the original edition would themselves have considered an ideal copy of the First Folio of Shakespeare: one in which every page is not only clear and readable throughout but represents the latest or most fully corrected state of the text. It is sought, that is, to give concrete representation to what has hitherto been only a theoretical entity, an abstraction: *the* First Folio text. For such an ideal representation of the Folio is not now, and almost certainly never has been, realized in any actual copy of the edition; and no previous facsimile has attempted to offer one. (pp. xxii–xxiii)

Bowers's abstract descriptive notion of 'ideal copy' becomes here a concrete entity that printers can hold and modern publishers can reproduce — 'what the printers of the original edition would themselves have considered an ideal copy of the First Folio of Shakespeare.'²⁵ Furthermore, the very claim that a facsimile maker can produce such a thing means that included within the notion of 'ideal copy' are matters of *text*. The laborious collations required to produce the Hinman Folio constitute the very editorial work Bowers specifically excluded from his discussion of ideal copy.²⁶

Hinman's appeal to the notion of ideal copy does several things. It blurs the distinctions between bibliographical language, literary critical language, and the language of the book trade: the bibliographical entity 'ideal copy' becomes the ideal copy to own or the ideal copy for citation. In addition, he has given material, saleable form to what in Bowers is an abstract point of reference. What results is a paradox of sorts. For Hinman finally produces something that in the book trade is undesirable — a made-up copy — not the

best of all possible copies, but the least of all valuable copies.²⁷ By allowing the bibliographical abstraction to become concrete, and by allowing the implication of value to be smuggled in, Hinman has opened the door to the argument that, bibliographically, discredits the entire enterprise. A book collector does not want to own such a thing (because it is the product of a later period); a student should not wish to study it from a bibliographical point of view, since it does not reproduce a material product of the time.

Hinman provided for the new facsimile a new system of line numbering. For some reviewers, the creation of one standard quickly blurred into another: 'From now on it is hoped that all references will be cited not as Ham. I.3.2 as in the past but as Ham. 463, and so on throughout the canon' (Marder, p. 31). The text represented is likewise 'the best possible *Folio* text' (*ibid.*). Again, we come back to the textual-critical issue. Hinman produced an edition, not an object of bibliographical study. It is valuable not because of any relation to a past event, but rather in direct relation to future use. It functions as a text, not a book and as a text it is subject to the same analysis as other texts. What is bibliographically of interest is Hinman's bibliographical work, not the material product of that work — the facsimile. This facsimile, in and of itself, adequately represents only his textual-critical decisions; it does not represent the bibliographical study that led to those decisions.

The Polytextual Lear

A further step in this progression from book to text is Michael Warren's composite facsimile edition of *King Lear*. Warren's edition includes loose-leaf facsimiles of the two *Lear* quartos and the Folio pages, plus an introductory parallel-text composite of the Folio and Quarto readings. Included in the unbound facsimile are photos of both corrected and uncorrected states of each page; the composite is produced by a cut-and-paste method, with the basic unit being the line.²⁸ In general, Warren is extremely clear about the nature of his project, but the problems associated with the concept of ideality are unavoidable:

In an editorial and publishing economy that promotes books presenting ideal texts, books in which scholars talk of a Platonic text achieved by distilling the original from the various imperfect exemplars, this book is conceived as a Socratic text, one that engages the

reader in a dialogue, in a process that leads along the paths of acquaintance and understanding. (Introduction, pt. 1, p. xxxix)

Although Hinman was insistent upon the basic printer's unit being the forme, in the Norton facsimile, he took the page as the unit, selecting from the Folger copies the clearest of the corrected pages, without regard to the forme of which each page was a part. Warren, by contrast, chooses his copy by forme, since in his view the particular combinations of pages found in Hinman's facsimile could not possibly have been assembled in Jaggard's shop.

As a result the pages here may not be quite as good in quality as Hinman's, but the total text proves better than that in any single book that was examined; and this facsimile, unlike Hinman's, presents an arrangement of pages that could have been produced at the time of printing. (pp. v-vi)²⁹

The result is again the 'ideal' intended by the printer: 'First come pages from invariant and corrected formes, producing the text of *King Lear* as the printer might have conceived it ideally,' (p. v). It is on this very matter of combining pages that Hinman and Warren most clearly pose the problem of ideality. For two meanings clash here. Warren rejects Hinman's selection as overly idealized: that is, for any particular forme, the two pages selected by Hinman were not combined in Jaggard's shop. The page-pairs Warren photographs were in fact combined at press.³⁰ Thus, his own version of *King Lear* is (theoretically) superior to Hinman's in being 'possible.'

Warren implicitly rejects a purely speculative ideal, but in so doing changes the implications of the bibliographical meaning of 'ideal copy.' When Warren claims his text is 'as the printer might have conceived it ideally,' he limits the printer's ideal to the possible. In other words, Warren's Jaggard could not have conceived of two perfect pages, if those two pages were not capable of being actually produced in his shop. If we take the language of ideality and possibility in its strongest sense, there is a clear flaw in Warren's reasoning here. Possibility and ideality are two different things. Whether we interpret 'ideal' in a bibliographical sense or, as Warren himself hints, in a Platonic sense, we cannot claim that something is more ideal or better represents an abstract ideal simply because that thing is possible. Quite the reverse.

Although this sounds like a critique of Warren, what I am suggesting here is that Warren's response is implicitly a legitimate critique

of Hinman. For it is Hinman who has insisted on the step that makes such quibbling possible: he has concretized Bowers's 'ideal copy' and claimed for that copy a status not only in descriptive bibliography but in analytical bibliography as well.

Warren's reviewers have recognized the problematic nature of the thing produced: is this a book? or an edition? or simply a research tool? To the reviewers, the key issue seems to be one of 'editorial intervention.' Halio characterized the Hinman facsimile as a 'non-book,' and so classified Warren's parallel-text volume; Warren's unbound photographs, by contrast, were 'true facsimiles with absolutely no editorial or other intervention' (p. 558).³¹ Weis, in a long and favourable review, notes that Warren's project 'comes out of the same ideological stable as the Oxford Shakespeare,' but later, somewhat illogically, claims that Warren's facsimiles are 'not edited as such.'³² Howard-Hill, however, characterizes the entire enterprise as editorial from beginning to end (something I do not think Warren would deny); thus all the materials are mediated in the same way that all editorial products are mediated. According to Howard-Hill, the parallel-text facsimile in particular is incorrectly mediated. Warren places lines from Q1 next to F. According to Howard-Hill, these need to be physically mediated by readings from Q2.³³

This objection is an interesting one, since it is based on a textual argument claiming Q2 as the exemplar behind F.³⁴ Whether valid or no, the nature of Howard-Hill's objection is significant: it is part of his insistence on the editorial nature not only of Warren's project but of any project 'presenting materials' for the study of *King Lear*. All bibliographical evidence, once communicated, is mediated, and if evidence is mediated, it is to some extent the product of editorial intervention. If this argument is pushed to an extreme, then the entire distinction between bibliography and textual criticism collapses. But so does Howard-Hill's specific critique of Warren's project: for if it is illegitimate to present Q1 next to F1, it might as easily be argued that it is illegitimate for a researcher to enter a special collections room and call up (horribile dictu!) the wrong copy of Q2.

In 1970, David Bevington claimed in a review that the Norton facsimile was 'cherished' by his students; through it, history was tangible: the facsimile 'miraculously combines accuracy with economy . . . it says, "This is how it was" ' (99). Obviously, the Norton facsimile, however valuable, is not in any serious way 'how it was,' and Bevington was certainly speaking here as a reviewer, not as an historian. The facsimile is, rather (as Hinman implies), an 'ideal' of

'how it was' or perhaps an ideal of how we would like 'it' (whatever that is) to have been. Bibliographically, it is well characterized by McKitterick as an illusion.³⁵ What the facsimile actually embodies is not a book but rather a text — not the historical moment indicated by the reproduced publication date, but the on-going historical process of text-production known as editing.

RÉSUMÉ

L'expression «ideal copy» est un terme technique employé en bibliographie descriptive, et le présent exposé concerne son emploi dans la description et la promotion de fac-similés. Même dans une discussion classique du terme par Fredson Bowers, les définitions ordinaires du mot «ideal» s'imposent. Les éditeurs de facsimilés, surtout ceux composés de pages de différents exemplaires du même livre, ont exploité cette imprécision. Ces fac-similés doivent être considérés strictement comme éditions auxquelles le langage technique de la bibliographie descriptive ne peut s'appliquer.

NOTES

- 1 Practical and theoretical problems have been noted for some time: Franklin B. Williams, Jr., 'Photo-Facsimiles of STC Books: A Cautionary Check List,' *Studies in Bibliography* 21 (1968): 109-19, and most recently, David McKitterick, 'Old Faces and New Acquaintances: Typography and the Association of Ideas,' *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 87 (1993): 163-86. See also the reservations expressed by Adrian Weiss, 'Reproductions of Early Dramatic Texts as a Source of Bibliographical Evidence,' *TEXT* 4 (1988): 237-68. For earlier discussion, see George Watson Cole, 'The Photostat in Bibliographical and Research Work — A Symposium,' *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 15 (1921): 1-21 (the entire issue is concerned with these questions) and Frank Weitenkampf, 'What is a Facsimile?' *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 37 (1943): 114-30.
- 2 Charlton Hinman, ed., *The First Folio of Shakespeare: The Norton Facsimile* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968).
- 3 For Peter Blayney, *The Texts of 'King Lear' and Their Origins*, vol. 1: *Nicholas Okes and the First Quarto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 2-8, the distinction opposes 'the study of books as material objects' and 'the study of the transmission of literary texts.' Blayney's discussion modifies that of W.W. Greg, 'The Present Position of Bibliography,' (1931), and 'The Function of Bibliography in Literary Criticism Illustrated in a Study of the Text of *King*

Lear, (1933), rpt., *Collected Papers*, ed. by J.C. Maxwell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 207–25, 267–97.

- 4 The status of facsimiles varies with historical periods. For the machine press period, a facsimile might well function as a reprint. For the incunabula period, the facsimile functions as does the facsimile of a manuscript — reproducing the text as embodied in a particular object in a particular locale. See further, recent work in the history of the book, stressing the similarity between manuscript and book production of the fifteenth century, e.g.: Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, ed. *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375–1475* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Sandra L. Hindman, *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450–1520* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).
- 5 That a facsimile is equivalent to a description is implied in Bowers's discussion of the description of title pages, in Fredson Bowers, 'Purposes of Descriptive Bibliography,' *The Library* ser. 5, 8 (1953): 1–22, rpt. *Readings in Descriptive Bibliography*, ed. John Bush Jones (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1974), 12–41.
- 6 Bowers, 'The Yale Folio Facsimile and Scholarship,' *Modern Philology* 53 (1955): 50–7; David Bevington, *Modern Philology* 68 (1970): 98–100, reviewing the Hinman facsimile in 1970, claims that Bowers's review was in part responsible for the later facsimile project.
- 7 *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974); see the note on the publisher's page: 'The "Through Line Numbers" as established by Charlton Hinman in *The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare* [are] used in this volume with their permission.' Although I cannot find the specific note addressing this, I assume from the textual notes that Hinman is responsible for the F1 readings (for example, p. 1302, notes for *King Lear* distinguishing corrected and uncorrected states of F and Q).
- 8 Similar claims have been made for the most recent facsimile of the first collected edition of Chaucer's works; see *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Works, 1532 with Supplementary Material from the Editions of 1542, 1561, 1598 and 1602*, facs. ed., D.S. Brewer (London: Scolar Press, 1969), Publisher's Postscript, and my 'On "Correctness": Note on Some Press Variants in Thynne's 1532 Edition of Chaucer,' *The Library* (forthcoming 1995).
- 9 The phrase is Bowers's own, referring in his review of the Yale facsimile to the earlier facsimile by Halliwell-Phillips as 'an arbitrarily mongrel copy' (p. 55).
- 10 For a discussion of these methods and the language used to describe them, see Joseph A. Dane, 'Copy Text and Its Variants in Some Recent Chaucer Editions,' *Studies in Bibliography* 44 (1991): 163–83.
- 11 Bowers, 'The Problem of the Variant Forme in a Facsimile Edition,' *The Library* ser. 5, 7 (1952): 262–72.
- 12 This is precisely the procedure later adopted by Warren, and (with reservations) by Hinman (who chooses page, rather than forme as unit). See also Ernest W. Sullivan II, 'Bibliography and Facsimile Editions,' *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 72 (1978): 327–9, on a 1977 reprint of a 1930 facsimile, both criticized as textual entities: 'The quarto first edition provides a less reliable text

- of "Biathanatos" than does the manuscript in the Bodleian Library; therefore, any reproduction of the quarto has only limited usefulness'; the new edition is 'totally useless to the academic community' (p. 327).
- 13 Bowers quite rightly emphasizes that the choice between 'corrected' and 'uncorrected' press variants is not as easy as the language might apply. Again, the textual-critical analogue is inescapable.
 - 14 One test here is the textual-critical response to the work of Bentley and Housman. Few textual critics openly place themselves in this tradition, and those who do claim a wilderness of principles: see, for example, George Kane, ed., *Piers Plowman: The A Version* (London: Athlone Press, 1960), 'Editorial Resources and Methods,' 115-72.
 - 15 Bowers's starting point is Greg's distinction between substantives and accidentals — a distinction designed for editorial purposes. 'Correctness, I should say, resides inherently in an author's substantives and only externally and superficially in the dress given these substantives' (Bowers, *Principles*, 268-9). Reference is to W.W. Greg, 'The Rationale of Copy-Text,' *Studies in Bibliography* 3 (1950): 19-36.
 - 16 George Kane has exposed the operation of this myth among editors of Middle English texts in their evaluation of individual manuscripts; see, e.g., "'Good" and "Bad" Manuscripts: Texts and Critics' (1986), rpt. George Kane, *Chaucer and Langland: Historical and Textual Approaches* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 206-13. See also the classic critique of the textual-critical privileging of manuscript 'sincerity' by A.E. Housman, 'The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism,' (1921), in A.E. Housman: *Selected Prose*, ed. John Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), esp. 138-43.
 - 17 'Bibliographically, errors in binding do not constitute state because they have nothing to do with the actual printing' (*Principles*, p. 74; see also, p. 115). A defective copy has a physical defect, probably produced later. An aberrant copy is a copy with an eccentric variant produced at the printing shop: 'Copies with binding or machining errors may be christened *aberrant* copies when they are not simply defective and when the correct state can be recognized' (p. 74, n22).
 - 18 For the hand-press period, the control of these levels is determined by the fact that for books of any significant size, type cannot be left standing for long periods of time. An edition, thus, must be planned during the printing process itself. For the machine press period, see, for example, Bowers's later chapters and the modification proposed by James B. Meriwether and Joseph Katz, 'A Redefinition of "Issue",' in Jones, ed., *Readings in Descriptive Bibliography*, 196-205.
 - 19 Cf. McKerrrow: 'Which we do should depend on whether the main intention seems to be to *correct* something (in which case it is a cancel) or to give new life to old sheets (in which case it is a reissue)'; Ronald B. McKerrrow, *An Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 177, quoted Bowers, *Principles*, 78; see also, *Principles*, 80-6 on re-issue.
 - 20 D.F. McKenzie, 'Printers of the Mind: Some Notes on Bibliographical Theories and Printing-House Practices,' *Studies in Bibliography* 22 (1969): 1-75.
 - 21 See, for example, the classic 1893 lecture by William Morris, 'The Ideal Book,' in William S. Peterson, ed., *The Ideal Book: Essays and Lectures on the Arts*

- of the Book by William Morris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 67–73.
- 22 Bevington, review of Hinman, p. 100. Bevington's review was in *Modern Philology*, itself the carrier of Bowers's vitriolic attack on the Yale facsimile in 1954. See above, notes 6 and 9.
 - 23 The notion of intention was at the center of textual-critical theory contemporary with Hinman's work. See, for example, Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), chapter 3: 'The Ideology of Final Intentions,' pp. 37–49 and notes, p. 136.
 - 24 G. Thomas Tanselle, 'A Description of Descriptive Bibliography,' *Studies in Bibliography* 45 (1992): 1–30, notes the growing 'attention to physical details for their own sake' (p. 25).
 - 25 The ideal copy Hinman speaks of here — one conforming to idealized printer's intentions — is one many bibliographers have specifically, if not always clearly, distinguished from the bibliographical 'ideal copy': Curt F. Bühler, in reference to press variants in Aldine editions, distinguishes the bibliographer's task of determining 'what the "ideal" copy of any Aldine may be' from the editor's goal of determining 'the final and correct text (as Aldus intended to present it to his readers).' Curt F. Bühler, 'Stop Press and Manuscript Corrections in the Aldine Edition of Benedetti's *Diaria de bello Carolino*,' *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 43 (1949): 365–73; rpt. *Early Books and Manuscripts: Forty Years of Research by Curt F. Bühler* (New York: Grolier Club, 1973), quotation at p. 138.
 - 26 For example, the work culminating in Charlton Hinman, *The Printing and Proof-Reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).
 - 27 See Marder's surprise at Quaritch's opinion that Hinman's composite facsimile was less valuable than a facsimile of a single exemplum: 'The question is, naturally, whether one wants a representative exemplar of one Folio or the best possible Folio text as a scholarly standard'; Louis Marder, 'The New Norton-Hinman Standard Folio: Its Aim, Background, and Predecessors,' *Shakespeare Newsletter* 18, 4 (1968): 31–3. Marder's review provides the history of facsimile editions throughout the nineteenth century and outlines the history of many of the issues involved here.
 - 28 Michael Warren, *The Complete King Lear (1608–1623)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). The word 'polytextuality' is from an earlier article, Michael J. Warren, 'Textual Problems, Editorial Assertions in Editions of Shakespeare' in Jerome J. McGann, ed., *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 23–37.
 - 29 The pages are not 'quite as good in quality' because Warren also decided, quite rationally, not to use any of the particular pages already chosen by Hinman for his facsimile (that is, he did not wish to duplicate readily available evidence). In some cases, the particular pages already chosen by Hinman would have provided the best quality photographs.
 - 30 The facsimiles both imply that any combination of formes was at least theoretically possible — something that would follow from the statements of Bowers

and Gaskell that binding produced an indiscriminate mixing of corrected and uncorrected formes. See Bowers, *Principles*, pp. 46–47 n6 and Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 354. This may be true of the Folio, but it does not seem to be true of other books produced during the same period. The only proof of what is possible is an extant version.

- 31 Jay L. Halio, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 90 (1991): 557–9. I am not certain whether Halio sees the major distinction as one between the composite text and the three disbound facsimiles, or as one distinguishing Warren's Q₂ from his Q₁ and F facsimiles. Warren's F and Q₁ are, like the Hinman facsimile, composite texts. Halio implies that Warren's Q₂, reproducing the 'corrected' variants available in a single copy, meets the requirements for book-ness. But since Warren includes photos of uncorrected variants and all pages are disbound, readers can organize a version of a book with any combination of corrected and uncorrected variants; Warren's facsimiles are deliberately unstable.
- 32 René Weis, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 54 (1991): 267.
- 33 'All edited texts and mediated texts, but some are more mediated than others'; T.H. Howard-Hill, *Review of English Studies* 43 (1992): 420–2.
- 34 For the importance of Q₂, see T.H. Howard Hill, 'The Problem of Manuscript Copy for *King Lear*,' *The Library* ser. 6, 4 (1982): 1–24, and references in Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 529–31.
- 35 McKitterick, 'Old Faces and New Acquaintances,' 167.